

Well, as it happened, we got 128 bipartisan votes that very first time. So you see, Mr. Speaker, when you lead, people follow. Because of a handful of progressive leaders and progressives in our country that were vocal and fearless, eventually public opinion turned. It turned against the Iraq war and turned towards peace. If we and other outspoken advocates hadn't ignored conventional wisdom and hadn't pressed for peace, the war in Iraq could still be going on today.

In April, Mr. Speaker, of 2004, I started speaking from this very spot on the House floor about my strong anti-Iraq war convictions. Eventually, these speeches focused on Afghanistan, where we've now been waging war for more than 11 years, despite more than 2,000 Americans dead and nearly \$600 billion wasted and even though we are undermining our own interests in failing to bring security and stability to Afghanistan.

Over the last 8-plus years, I've spoken here nearly every day that I could to drive home what a moral disaster and strategic failure these wars have been. When constituents and others call or come up to me or write and thank me, I say, But we're still there. I don't deserve thanks until all of our troops are home.

You know, Mr. Speaker, because you've been here for many of them, that my speeches haven't just been about bringing our troops home. They've offered a new vision for global engagement. From here I've outlined my SMART Security platform, which calls for development and diplomacy instead of invasions and occupations; civilian surges instead of military surges. SMART Security means helping other nations educate their children, care for their sick, and strengthen their democratic institutions. SMART Security says we can make America safe by building international good will and by empowering people with humanitarian assistance instead of sending troops or launching drone attacks. It's the right thing to do. It's the smart thing to do. And it costs pennies on the dollar compared to military force.

So, Mr. Speaker, today I'm delivering that message for the 444th and final time on the House floor to speak on a 5-minute Special Order. This is the last of my Special Order speeches on war and peace and SMART Security. I'm retiring from Congress at the end of this year, and I believe part of my legacy will be that I worked diligently for peace and a safer world.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to acknowledge that sometimes I've been accused of wanting a "perfect world." But I consider that a compliment. Our Founders strove to form a "more perfect Union." Why shouldn't we aim for a perfect world? You see, I'm absolutely certain that if we don't work toward a perfect world, we won't ever come close to providing a safe, healthy, and secure world for our grandchildren and their grandchildren.

I thank my wonderful staff who have helped me over the last 20 years to work for a perfect world, which means peace, health, and security for all.

SO-CALLED RIGHT TO WORK

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Ohio (Ms. KAPTUR) for 5 minutes.

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, as a Representative from Ohio, a State that borders Michigan, I rise to stand in solidarity with the workers of Michigan. Many Ohioans I represent actually drive to work in Michigan. And due to the high-handed actions of Michigan's Governor and its legislature, they actually railroaded legislation through Michigan, with no hearings, to take away the rights of Michigan workers to fund the collective bargaining process that results in living-wage worker contracts.

The workers of Michigan are fighting to maintain their rights to a fair day's wage for a fair day's work. I support their rights and the rights of every American to organize and negotiate by contract for proper pay and benefits, regardless of which State they live in. The rights of labor by contract are critical to growing our middle class, as opposed to rights by happenstance that are always up for grabs, where workers have no rights and live in fear of the future.

Michigan's Republican ideologues passed so-called "right-to-work" legislation. Well, let's be clear: the bill being pushed there by the far right should really be called the Right to Work for Less. And that is exactly what President Obama called it. To quote Bob King, the visionary president of the United Auto Workers of this country:

Every right-to-work State has lower wages, lower benefits, less security for workers and more income inequality.

And they have a shrinking middle class. The UAW is right: if you happen to live and work in a State that has a so-called right-to-work law on the books, you earn an average of \$5,000 less a year than if you lived in a worker rights State. The bill signed last night in Michigan strips labor organizations of their right to collect dues to cover the cost of negotiating a collective bargaining agreement.

The Michigan law is pure politics. No, it is more than that. It is an old-school union-busting technique, pure and simple. And in Michigan and Ohio, we know a lot about union busting. As a daughter of auto workers, I know the history of the hired goons who bludgeoned auto workers back in the 1930s at River Rouge as workers began to stand up for their human rights as they labored in the dungeons of the automotive production facilities at the time.

I actually would like to challenge the Governor of Michigan to come with me and let's work on the line for a month in one of those repetitive-motion jobs

that make and characterize modern automotive production. They're not easy jobs. I would like him to install the windows on the right side of a vehicle as it moves down the line over and over and over and over and over and over again. Let's see how much fun he'll have.

A year ago, we in Ohio witnessed a similar effort to eliminate unions. Right-wing legislators moved through legislation that would have ended collective bargaining as we know it in Ohio for public sector workers. We're talking about firefighters, police, and teachers. Well, the people of Ohio broadly rejected that union busting earlier this year.

□ 1100

Citizens organized a ballot initiative to restore worker rights in Ohio, and they won. It was called Issue 2. The people of Ohio voted to overwhelmingly protect the rights of those who protect us and who teach our children.

While worker rights were protected in Ohio, up north, what was done in Lansing, intends to extend far beyond the borders of just Michigan. It will impact workers who commute from my State of Ohio and Indiana.

This is about more than just one State. In fact, this is a national issue, not a states' rights issue at all. The Michigan union-busting bill is a direct result of weak Federal legislation, and I'm talking about section 14(b) of the Taft-Hartley Act, which weakens the rights of labor. Congress should overturn that part of the law and reaffirm its role in protecting the internationally recognized labor rights of every American citizen.

That is why I have joined a number of my colleagues in introducing legislation, H.R. 2775, that would do just that. We should not have individual States competing against each other in a race to the bottom. Haven't we seen enough of that?

We need to support and build back the American middle class by creating good jobs, good-paying jobs, and secure benefits through secure contracts. I stand attired in red today in solidarity with the workers of Michigan, and I am proud to do so.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until noon today.

Accordingly (at 11 o'clock and 1 minute a.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1200

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker at noon.

PRAYER

Reverend Jerome Milton, Greater New Pleasant Hill Missionary Baptist

Church, Tyler, Texas, offered the following prayer:

Father God, how loving, how gracious, how wonderful, how good, how vast are Your methods for bringing us ever so close to You so that we might experience Your awesome power of love and care for us as a Nation.

Lord God, we pray today that You will let common ground and middle ground be the order of the day for the common good of our Nation.

Loving God, bless the Members of the people's House. Give them wisdom and understanding to be a blessing to our house.

Merciful God, in times like these, oh, precious Lord, take their hands, touch their hearts, speak to their souls, that the Members of this body may be bold servants of this Nation.

Our eternal God, may all that is done this day be for Your greater honor and glory, forever and ever.

Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER. Will the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. SARBANES) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. SARBANES led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

WELCOMING REVEREND JEROME R. MILTON

The SPEAKER. Without objection, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GOHMERT) is recognized for 1 minute.

There was no objection.

Mr. GOHMERT. Mr. Speaker, our visiting chaplain today is Reverend Jerome R. Milton, pastor of the Greater New Pleasant Hill Missionary Baptist Church in Tyler, Texas.

As a small child, he was left with his brother and sister in a rundown motel in San Diego to die. They were placed in a horrific orphanage, where despicable abuses were inflicted, ultimately resulting in the suicide of his siblings.

Jerome was eventually placed in the home of Dadie Florence Brown, the 14th foster home. This uneducated but strong-willed lady told young Jerome that, despite all he'd been through, "Don't allow your abuse to be your excuse." She knew God would make him something special, and she prayed for him every day.

Jerome could run fast and play football well and got a scholarship to do

both at UCLA. As he says, God moved him from foster care to people care. He and his wife, Charlene, have nine children, six of them adopted.

In addition to being a pastor, he's the head track coach at Gorman Catholic High School, leading his teams to 10 State championships, and has been Tyler's Citizen of the Year with the T.B. Butler Award. His work has spanned race, religion, all types of barriers, and he has blessed so many lives, including mine.

COMMUNICATION FROM THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BASS of New Hampshire) laid before the House the following communication from the Clerk of the House of Representatives:

OFFICE OF THE CLERK,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, December 12, 2012.

Hon. JOHN A. BOEHNER,
The Speaker, U.S. Capitol, House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. SPEAKER: Pursuant to the permission granted in Clause 2(h) of Rule II of the Rules of the U.S. House of Representatives, the Clerk received the following message from the Secretary of the Senate on December 12, 2012 at 11:08 a.m.:

That the Senate passed without amendment H.R. 4014.

That the Senate passed without amendment H.R. 4367.

That the Senate passed without amendment H.R. 2467.

That the Senate passed without amendment H.R. 3319.

That the Senate passed with an amendment H.R. 6328.

That the Senate passed S. 3564.

With best wishes, I am
Sincerely,

KAREN L. HAAS.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair will entertain 15 further requests for 1-minute speeches on each side of the aisle.

PRESIDENT OBAMA'S FISCAL CLIFF PLAN CALLS FOR \$1.2 TRILLION IN NEW SPENDING

(Mr. WILSON of South Carolina asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, during his campaign for reelection, the President called for a balanced approach to solve the fiscal cliff crisis. Unfortunately, the plan his administration submitted to Congress does not include the spending cuts necessary to address our Nation's \$16 trillion national debt.

According to Senate Budget Committee Ranking Member JEFF SESSIONS' staff's calculation of data from the Congressional Budget Office and the Office of Management and Budget, the President's plan suggests that

roughly 75 percent, or \$1.2 trillion, in new revenue be directed to new spending instead of deficit reduction.

The fiscal cliff must be averted to protect our economy for future generations. Yesterday, House Speaker JOHN BOEHNER asked the President to identify specific cuts he is willing to make for a balanced approach. I hope the President will take immediate action so progress can be made for a bipartisan solution.

In conclusion, God bless our troops, and we will never forget September the 11th in the global war on terrorism.

LESSONS LEARNED IN THE WAKE OF HURRICANE SANDY

(Mr. HIGGINS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. HIGGINS. Mr. Speaker, there are many lessons to be learned in the wake of the hurricane that devastated parts of New York and New Jersey, one of which is the importance of electronic medical records and health information technology.

While many hospitals and medical centers were damaged by the storm, hospitals that employed electronic medical records were able to ensure that vital health information was maintained and not lost. Not only that, electronic medical records enabled continuity of care as patients were transferred between hospitals.

Mr. Speaker, this is just one example of how electronic health records can improve quality of patient care, integrate health systems, and ultimately, reduce unnecessary costs.

My western New York community was an early adopter of electronic medical records and has since been recognized nationally as a leader in health information technology. I urge the House to continue the widespread adoption of health information technology and to assist in its expansion across the country.

□ 1210

TOMBSTONE, ARIZONA, WATER SUPPLY FIASCO

(Mr. GOSAR asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. GOSAR. Last week, the ninth circuit court heard a case regarding Tombstone, Arizona's right to access its water supply. Last year, a devastating combination of wildfires and monsoons struck Tombstone, leaving only 3 of its 25 springs in operation. Tombstone has been engaged in a year-long standoff with the Federal Government over the repairs that will restore the town's water supply because those springs are in wilderness areas and they are prohibited from using mechanized equipment to make the necessary repairs.

This situation is not unique. A similar disaster occurred in northern Arizona after the 2010 Schultz Pass fire.